



## Inaugural Speeches

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Extract from NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard and Papers Tuesday 21 February 2017.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (15:59):** I am humbled to address the oldest Parliament in Australia for the first time. Today I commit to working every day to retain and strengthen the trust and confidence the people of Wollongong have placed in me. We commence sittings this year with both a new member for Wollongong and a new Premier. It is a fresh start. This is an opportunity for the Premier to deliver the fair share she has promised the Illawarra. Wollongong is a city forged in steel, mining and heavy industry. From the Dalfram dispute to the campaign to improve Port Kembla's air quality, its industrial history and history of activism mean that Wollongong holds a special place in the labour movement and the Labor Party.

To advance our interests, the political and industrial arms of the labour movement united to advocate for Labor's plan for Wollongong during the by-election. We showed that we are at our best when we work together. The number of people who volunteered their time was phenomenal. I pay particular thanks to members of every Labor Party branch in the Illawarra. I thank New South Wales and Illawarra Young Labor—a committed group of future leaders coordinated by Jen Light and Alex Costello, many of whom gave up every weekend for weeks. I thank the trade union movement. In particular I thank Graeme Kelly, Gary Vann and the United Services Union; Gerard Hayes, Renee Cross and the Health Services Union; Tony Sheldon, Rob Pirc and the Transport Workers Union; Lee Webb, Bob Timbs and the United Mineworkers of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union [CFMEU]; Gary Keane, Mick Cross and the Maritime Union of Australia; Daniel White and the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union; Wayne Phillips and the Australian Workers' Union; and Tara Moriarty and United Voice.

I thank long-time friends and supporters, including David Voltz, Jane Shelton, Owen Torpy, Laura Ryan, Gail Morgan, Kathryn Conroy, Simon Tatz, Amanda Bresnan, Chris Parkin, Donna Tetley and Aaron Rule. A few of them are in the gallery today.

My wife, Alison, my strongest supporter and toughest critic, is right more times than she is not. She is simply amazing. Her advice can be blunt, but it is always effective. Her final words on the way to my first media event are firmly etched in my memory. The reality is that no-one has shown more confidence in me, been willing to take up causes with me or to encourage me in the way that she has. We are in this together. I am grateful for her love and support, her intelligence, her ideas, her instincts and her hard work that have allowed me to be here today, fulfilling my dream to represent the community that we were both born into.

Wollongong is in my blood. I am the third generation of my family to call it home. To paraphrase our marketing slogan: "I love the Gong!" I am a proud product of its public education system—the first in my family to complete high school and university. During my time in this place I will work to advance public education, particularly as we look to improve the way we support children living with autism. To the best of my knowledge, I am also the first representative in this place to come from the small mining village of Mount Kembla, on the outskirts of Wollongong. Mount Kembla is infamous for a mine explosion in 1902 that killed 96 men and boys. That event is commemorated every year as an important reminder of the need to be vigilant about workplace standards and safety.

I have always been lucky to have the love, support and encouragement of my parents, Ina and Ian, and my brother, Glen, and sister, Jane. I thank them for everything. Their support and encouragement has expanded to include my mother-in-law, Pem; my brothers-in-law, Boyd and Colin; my sisters-in-law, Rosie and Karen; my nieces, Kimberley and Annabelle; my nephew, Caelen; and my Aunt Edith. I thank them for their help and the confidence they have shown in me. I also acknowledge my grandparents, Gunda and Villis Klavins, and Bill and Edna Scully, and my father-in-law, Ron Byrnes, who have all passed away but who would have loved to be here today.

Wollongong has grown through waves of migration. In making this point I acknowledge that European settlement is only a small part of its history. The Wodi Wodi people have lived in the Illawarra for tens of thousands of years and have an important role to play in our future. I pay my respects to their elders past and present. My own family reflects our migrant history. Mum migrated from post-Second World War Germany, while Dad's family originates in Ireland. Migration created a community accepting of all. Ethnic and religious backgrounds took a back seat. People moved to Wollongong for a better life and, largely, they achieved it. Residents new to Wollongong might not have shared a common language, but they shared common goals and values. In representing my community I look to harness the strength of the tapestry of people and backgrounds that comprise it, embracing our shared values of fairness, decency and equality of opportunity.

These shared values are Labor values, and they are my values. My values and passion for our region prompted people like Carolyn Brown, Steve Tyerman, Vivien Twyford, Nick and Judy Whitlam, Colin and Melissa Markham, Bevan Fermor, Fay Campbell, Wendy Richardson, Jenny Osmond and cricketer legend Adam Gilchrist to back me publicly. I thank each of them for putting their trust and confidence in me. I bring to the role knowledge and experience gained in a mix of volunteer, adviser and chief of staff roles for Stephen Martin, David Campbell, Sharon Bird, Chris Hayes, Craig Emerson and Justine Elliot—all of whom have served or continue to serve their communities with distinction. I thank them for teaching and mentoring me. I have learned a lot from each of them, especially Sharon and Chris.

People often assume that Wollongong has always been represented by Labor. However, under various electorate names it has been represented by the Liberals, an Independent, nationalists, protectionists, free traders and the Australian Labor Party. Some also make the false assertion that Labor does not support our region. But we see Labor's investments everywhere we go. One can get on a free bus, delivered by Labor, and take a journey around Wollongong that highlights Labor investments such as the Wollongong Entertainment Centre and upgraded WIN Stadium; a steelworks that continues to operate as a result of action by Labor governments, the expanded port of Port Kembla, now the largest vehicle importation hub in the country; a redeveloped Wollongong Hospital that was an eight-metre hole in the ground just 20 years ago; a world-class university and Innovation Campus that is home to world-leading academics and researchers; and first-class TAFE facilities at Wollongong and West Wollongong, to name a few.

People criticise politicians, but these achievements are just part of the legacy of my predecessors. On behalf of our community, I thank them for building a strong foundation for the future. But we can make our community even better. Wollongong deserves its fair share. The elderly, disabled and many others find it almost impossible to access trains at Unanderra station. It is a 72-step struggle to the platform. The station needs lifts, and I am determined to see them built. Labor has committed to

them, and we look to the Government to match that commitment. Today I pose the same question to the Premier that she posed in her own inaugural speech: "How long must we wait for this basic service?" If you cannot access a service, it might as well not exist. A State that trumpets being number one should never settle for second best for its most disadvantaged citizens.

Wollongong's unemployment rate remains stubbornly above the New South Wales average, and about 20,000 people a day leave the region for work. I know what it is like, having commuted for nearly 15 years myself. Over the next 20 years Sydney's south-west will be home to more than a million people and an estimated 100,000 more jobs. I was pleased to work with the University of Wollongong when it decided to engage directly with the region through a campus at Liverpool. In a similar way, we need to invest in infrastructure connecting Wollongong to that growing region. Improving infrastructure connections will also increase tourists and recreational visitors to the Illawarra, helping to create more local jobs.

At the same time we must also invest to support our own population growth. Despite the best efforts of great staff, Wollongong Hospital has some of the longest waiting times in the State. The future of services at Port Kembla Hospital is uncertain. We have multimillion-dollar school and housing maintenance backlogs. The promise of a thoracic surgeon at Wollongong Hospital is unfulfilled. We deserve to get back our seat at the Cabinet table through the reinstatement of a Minister for the Illawarra.

I am committed to strengthening our local economy, society and environment by pursuing the initiatives in Labor's Illawarra Jobs Action Plan, a plan developed with Labor leader Luke Foley, the shadow ministry and Caucus, who engaged with Wollongong residents and organisations to better understand our needs. I thank them for their support. They listened to local problems, developed local solutions informed by local knowledge, and committed to real plans and real solutions. The Leader of the Opposition was clear: Wollongong matters to Labor and it will always be taken seriously. And he meant it—I mean, you can hardly keep the guy away from the place! He has shown that by focusing on the issues that matter to people and transforming this into a clear direction for Labor the old adage rings true: Good policy makes good politics.

We communicated our plan through a comprehensive campaign coordinated by the formidable team of Kaila Murnain, Pat Garcia and David Dobson, supported by the offices of the Leader and shadow ministry, and the smart and energetic team in Wollongong of Liam Rankine, Gino Mandarino, Jess Malnersic, Caitlin Roodenrys, Jessica Malcolm-Roberts, B. J. Roberts, Chris Lacey, Janai Tabbernor, Chris Snewin, Blake Osmond, Elyse Delphino, and Jenelle and Rod Rimmer—to name a few. We were cheered on from afar by Mitch, Monika and Marta O'Dwyer on an overseas posting, by Jessica Sparks, who was recovering from her second double lung transplant, and by Mike Meurer and Kristen Wall in Queensland. I thank my council colleagues Ann Martin, Chris Connor, David Brown, Janice Kershaw and Marianne Saliba, along with the staff in the offices of the members for Cunningham, for Whitlam, for Keira and for Shellharbour for their help. Time prevents me from naming all of the literally hundreds of people who helped me, but I thank each of them.

However, I would like to thank some individually, especially Dot and John Park—also known as the parents of the member for Keira—Tom Ward, Bob Turner, Norma and Michael Wilson, Neil Barnett, Tania Brown, Brian Dellit, Fay Elbourne, Jihad and Hussein Salem, Peter Bubev, George Bartolo, Craig Kershaw, Ann and Bob Bower, Vicky King, Charlie Habazin, Simon, Aldo and Annette Zulian, Lou

Stefanovski, Allan and Pat Cobbin, Bev and Kev Reed, Rusty Abbott, Kiley Martin, Linda Campbell, Michael Knight, Dom Ofner, David Latham and Dermot Ryan and the Irish Friends of Labor, John and Liz Hobbs, Anne Wilcox and Stella Chapman, along with some great young campaigners, including Peter Munford, Alex Saliba, David Atkins, Josh Mills, Kyle Waples, Blake Horcicka, Patrick Bell, Hugh McClure, and Rita Andraos. I thank my friends from Bellambi Surf Club and former colleagues from the University of Wollongong. I also thank the Federal member for Whitlam, Stephen Jones, and sincerely thank my great mates from the Illawarra Labor team in this place—the member for Keira and the member for Shellharbour. Your advice, counsel and assistance was simply superb. I thank you so much.

For the past five years I have worked at the University of Wollongong's Innovation Campus alongside dedicated researchers who are shaping our industrial, employment and social futures. I was the only economist in the building and my colleagues were never convinced that a background in the dismal science was good enough for me to take on science in the labs. It was probably just as well—with thousands of chemicals in the building if it all went wrong the explosion would have rivalled Sydney's New Year's Eve fireworks! Research in nanotechnology, 3D printing, autonomous vehicles and sustainable buildings are just some of the areas being advanced at the University of Wollongong. At the Australian Institute for Innovative Materials, where I was the chief operating officer, the task was to innovate, scale up and help to develop devices integrating research breakthroughs. It was a complete process to turn research into reality.

Whether it is more efficient energy generation and storage or personalised medical devices, today's innovations will be part of our future. Hopefully, future breakthroughs will help others diagnosed with cancer at a young age like my friends Louise Biggs, Campbel Giles and Toni Newman—three strong women taken from us in their prime. Wollongong will continue to make a great contribution to Australia's future—just as we have always done. Over the past couple of decades Wollongong has transformed from a steel, mining and heavy industrial town to a more service-based economy. We are the City of Innovation for a reason.

Comparing the Wollongong of my childhood, which had around 20,000 people employed at the steelworks and a few thousand students at the university, with the Wollongong of today, with a few thousand employed by the steelworks and more than 30,000 students enrolled globally at its university, is a clear demonstration of the change. But this does not mean that our steel and traditional industries are not part of the Illawarra's future—they most certainly are. That is why we have developed our steel plan that helps provide a sustainable future for steel and metal manufacturing. But our city and its employment mix has changed.

While I welcome the potential of emerging technologies, I realise that this feeling is not universal. As the son of a retired truck driver and from a family who owned an airport shuttle small business, I am conscious of the impact of automation on the future of work. It is claimed that nearly two-thirds of children who started school a few weeks ago will work in jobs not yet thought of. And more than a quarter of existing jobs will be obsolete in a generation. Parliamentary Library research suggests that more than half of the jobs in the Wollongong electorate are at risk from computerisation and automation—that is nearly 17,000 jobs. I do not believe all of these jobs will disappear without replacement, but naturally people become concerned about the future when they do not

immediately see their place in it. After all, very few middle-aged steelworkers go on to create high-tech start-ups.

But innovation is about more than just IT and fintech. Innovation and disruptive technologies have given rise to the "gig economy"—our next industrial revolution—the new or the "now" economy. This is changing competition and employment relationships. This is not new. Technological change has changed work and society in the past. But innovations and technology need to work for us. They should help improve the common good, not erode it. They should help bind people, not divide them. They should help create jobs, not destroy them. They should drive new industries, new jobs and new possibilities. The "gig economy" is here to stay—trying to regulate disruptive technologies out of existence is nothing more than wishful thinking. But that does not mean we have to accept workers being put into positions where employment flexibility becomes nothing more than employment insecurity. And a global labour market should not mean job chasing, involving a wages race to the bottom.

Workers deserve a level playing field. Underemployment and underutilisation, which are growing, should not be allowed to become the norm. Instead, governments should set effective market rules, compliance regimes and intervene only when necessary. Governments can and should make access to legal redress more understandable and accessible. Governments can and should make our school education, TAFEs and apprenticeships more responsive to the impacts of technological changes. Governments can and should provide more comprehensive science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and access to the digital devices that students need.

To complement technological advances, State governments must drive the next round of microeconomic reforms to help boost productivity and assist in job creation. To support new and existing businesses embrace new technologies, I have advocated for the creation of environments like the imake maker space, which allows people to test new technologies and techniques before committing to large capital outlays. After all, many innovations will continue to come from the shop floor. Government procurement can and should support new industries and new jobs. The barriers to entry for government procurement for new companies are often high. Risk aversion can force purchases of overseas equipment while local companies selling a cheaper but superior product are locked out. Reserving a proportion of the Government's procurement spend for innovative, new products would support risk taking, entrepreneurship and help speed up the time to bring new products to market.

As a Parliament, we must be across research and innovation and be ready for the associated ethical and social debates. People expect us to lead debates, not follow them. Innovators are imagining the future of hospitals, schools and communities, and we must do the same. People also expect more rapid implementation of government decisions. They do not understand why after decisions have been made on issues like medicinal cannabis, for example, people can be left waiting and suffering because implementation is time consuming. Instead, it has been left to the Labor Opposition to take the lead on this issue. Together, this is using government policy, procurement and implementation as an exemplar. Governments can and should lead by example and help spread the benefits of new ideas to as many people as possible. This is how we can help to make sure that New South Wales is always at the forefront of new innovations, new industries and new jobs.

The future of new jobs and new industries should not be the exclusive domain of the Sydney central business district [CBD]. Wollongong has a big role to play in our State's future. Wollongong can help to take pressure off Sydney. The combination of technology and a supportive environment nurtured by governments can advance communities like Wollongong. To do this we do not need to embrace policies of economic isolationism or hand out massive regional relocation subsidies. Rather, rational policies aimed at growing jobs and the economy, at increasing income and improving its distribution can be employed. These are policies built on our shared values of fairness, decency and equality of opportunity. Governments can and should lead by example with a serious effort at decentralisation.

The multiplier effect of shifting businesses and government operations to regional centres is considerable while the impact on the Sydney CBD is largely negligible. It helps improve lifestyles by taking pressure off transport networks, reducing commuting and congestion. It grows regional opportunities. When I worked with the team from Advantage Wollongong we sold the benefits of Wollongong to businesses looking to relocate. It was not a hard sell when we outlined our relatively lower costs, positive business environment and the lifestyle benefits for staff in Wollongong. It was a win-win, yet this Government—unlike previous Labor governments—seems unable to recognise it. In six years it has relocated only 38 public sector jobs to the Illawarra.

Decentralisation will require some supporting infrastructure but it first needs a real and genuine commitment from government. Many of the challenges we face are not new. Fundamentally, it remains a question of who gets what, why, how and at what cost? At times we need to unpack problems and begin from first principles rather than scramble for gesture politics and quick fixes that can entrench problems. Addressing housing and housing affordability warrants such an approach. We need to be willing to start with the question of why not? As George Bernard Shaw wrote:

You see things; and you say, "Why?" But I dream things that never were; and I say "Why not?"

We need to be as creative and innovative in our roles as legislators and policymakers as our world-leading researchers are in creating new possibilities. Governments cannot solve every problem, but a shared responsibility between government, the people it serves and the organisations that help to deliver solutions can make a real difference. To help restore respect, integrity and faith in public life we parliamentarians must also be willing to be more upfront with our constituents. Paul Keating said:

We Australians have a remarkable future within our grasp, a future which other countries can only dream of. We have this great goal and Labor has a great passion to reach it.

This is very much the case in Wollongong. We are ready for the future. The key elements already exist: a skilled, multilingual workforce; a research-driven university; and connection with an international airport and a working port. This will allow us to seize new opportunities such as the production of medical devices, green-collar jobs, energy storage, or developing new ways of tackling dementia or caring for our aged, disabled and mentally ill. These new opportunities can also increase demand in our existing industries.

If we are to address the politics of division and feelings of alienation we must share the benefits of economic growth beyond the Sydney CBD. We must do everything possible to support those who were not blessed with opportunity and address the pockets of poverty, inequality and disadvantage that exist in the suburbs of Wollongong, the outer suburbs of Sydney and other parts of the State.

Improving access to housing, access to education, access to job opportunities and access to quality health care can be supported by spreading the corridors of growth. That is fair, that is decent and that helps provide equality of opportunity. In pursuing this I commit to working every day for everyone in Wollongong. I believe in a future where everyone gets a shot at a good education, a decent job near where they live and a bright future. Together, we can achieve this. I thank the House.